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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 006853

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: GOVERNMENT PRESSURED TO TAKE
ACTION FOLLOWING TRAIN BOMBING/RAIDS

REF: BANGKOK 6764

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton. Reason 1.4 (d)

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 27 insurgents bombed a rail-line in Narathiwat province, derailing four cars on a passenger train. The bombing followed the dramatic series of weapons raids across far southern Thailand on October 26. According to some local observers the latest attacks demonstrate the ineffectiveness of Thai security forces in the South as well as growing boldness and sophistication from the insurgents. In response to the attacks Prime Minister Thaksin instructed security forces to go after the insurgents more forcefully, increasing speculation that the government is moving towards a harsher crackdown. END SUMMARY

2. (SBU) On October 27 insurgents bombed a rail-line in the Sungai Padi district of Narathiwat province, causing four cars from the Nakohn Sri Thammarat to Sungai Kolok train to derail, and leaving one passenger hurt. Rail-lines in the far South -- and security forces protecting them -- have been attacked before, including a March 27, 2005 bombing and shooting attack on a rail-car carrying security forces in Narathiwat. However, this is the first instance in recent memory of a civilian commuter train being directly attacked. This latest bombing followed the series of more than 60 raids conducted by insurgents on October 26 which resulted in the theft of some 90 weapons from village defense volunteers (reftel). Following the raids and bombing Prime Minister Thaksin has responded forcefully, vowing that security forces would use aggressive new tactics to go after the militants.

3. (C) Narathiwat Governor Pracha Therat told emboffs that he believes the train bombing and coordinated raids were messages from the insurgents that they have the potential to attack at will. (NOTE: Pracha also said that all available information indicates that the attackers came from the local community. END NOTE)

4. (C) Separately, Dr. Panitan Wattanayagorn, a security expert from Chulalongkorn University, told emboffs that he believed these latest attacks reflected "the ineffectiveness of the command structure of security agencies, inefficient intelligence management, and lack of good coordination among military and police forces." Both Panitan and Governor Pracha agreed that Thai security forces had advance warning of the planned raids on October 26 but were unable to disrupt them. Panitan also opined that the RTG was trying to downplay the seriousness of the October 27 train bombing. Panitan said that he had information that the militants had used more than 60 kilograms of potassium nitrate in the bombing, which he believes demonstrates growing sophistication in the bomb-making capabilities of the militants.

5. (C) COMMENT: These most recent attacks, while causing few casualties, demonstrate the growing boldness of the insurgents and illustrate once again the lack of progress by the RTG over the past two years to disrupt their activities. Thaksin's vow of a more "proactive" response against the instigators is in line with the tone that he and other senior Thai officials have been using in recent weeks which has lead to widespread local speculation that a harsh crackdown by the government is in the works. Although the government forces on the ground have shown restraint in response to recent attacks, the insurgents' successes will certainly be a provocation. The government is under increasing pressure to show it can stop -- or, at least, punish, the insurgents. END COMMENT
BOYCE